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Recent Books

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RECENT BOOKS

Dinstein, Yoram. *War, Aggression and Self-Defense*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994. 325pp. \$110

In this second edition of his classic 1988 study of the topic, Yoram Dinstein, president and professor of international law at Tel Aviv University, has authored what many scholars believe to be the single best study of the *jus ad bellum*—that body of international law governing the resort to force by states. His analysis is three-tiered. The study begins with an examination of the legal boundaries dividing war from peace. The discussion of *status mixtus*, that is, conflicts which exhibit characteristics of both war and peace, is especially noteworthy. With “war” defined, Dinstein turns to its legality under treaties, including the Charter of the United Nations, and customary international law. Particular attention is paid to the concept of aggression, as explicated both in the UN General Assembly’s resolution purporting to define it and in the Nuremberg Tribunal’s holding regarding crimes against peace. Finally, in the most “provocative” section of the book, Dinstein dissects the most widely recognized exception to the prohibition on the use of force—self-defense. Not only is self-defense authorized in the UN Charter when facing an “armed attack,” but it is also considered an inherent right of victim states under customary international law. The most troubling issue is, when can a response in self-defense occur? Must a state wait until the blow falls before defending itself, or may it act preemptively? Dinstein argues that the aggressor has to have embarked on an “irreversible course of action”; in doing so, he rejects notions of “anticipatory self-defense” in favor of “interceptive self-defense.”

The work has been completely updated to factor in the end of the Cold War, the 1990–91 Persian Gulf War, and the conflicts in the Balkans. Dinstein concludes that these events, particularly the Gulf war, have to some extent breathed new life into the security scheme of the UN Charter, a scheme long unfulfilled due to divisive bipolarity. Despite this phenomenon, and though the risks of a global cataclysm have diminished, the use of force regionally has grown significantly, a trend Dinstein highlights. *War, Aggression and Self-Defense* is well written, exhaustively researched, and superbly reasoned. Like its predecessor, it is certain to become a modern classic of international law.

Dye, Ira. *The Fatal Cruise of the Argus: Two Captains in the War of 1812*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. 368pp. \$35

At a time when the last great wars in the age of fighting sail are popularized in the novels of Patrick O’Brian and by the two-hundredth-anniversary

celebrations for the USS *Constitution*, Ira Dye's comparative study of these two naval officers is particularly valuable. His well written and meticulously researched volume culminates in the battle that merged the careers of Henry Allen and John Maples off St. David's Head, Wales, on 14 August 1813, between USS *Argus* and HMS *Pelican*. Neither this single-ship defeat for the U.S. Navy nor its main actors have previously received much attention from naval historians. Dye's research, however, proves that Henry Allen, of Providence, Rhode Island, was an engaging and charismatic man. A paradigm of the American naval officer corps, he participated in nearly every important action that the U.S. Navy saw in the years of his service between 1800 and 1813, when he often played a central, if subordinate, role. His opposite number was an older man, John Maples of the Royal Navy, who joined up as a twelve-year-old in 1784. Acquiring a wide variety of sea experience, Maples went on to serve under Horatio Nelson at Copenhagen and in a frigate at Trafalgar. This book is a comparative study of two typical officers of opposing sides, and of their ships and crews. The details of the forgotten naval battle between the brigs *Argus* and *Pelican* are woven around these lesser figures of the age, creating a highly readable and very effective microcosm of the age of fighting sail.

Wells, Donald A., ed. *An Encyclopedia of War and Ethics*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1996. 552pp. \$95

The editor and forty-four other contributors, including many leading experts, offer nearly three hundred entries in the huge overlap of two large subjects. The essays are clearly written, rich with information, and augmented with brief bibliographical recommendations for further reading. From "Accidental Nuclear War" to "Zyklon B War Crimes Trial," this book will likely satisfy even a reader demanding rather precise information. Often, for a topic not accorded its own full entry, the book's twenty-five page index is sufficiently detailed to identify an entry that discusses that topic or suggest a related topic.

There are some significant criticisms, however. The coverage is uneven, with marginal topics included and even addressed at surprising length. It is not clear why, for example, "Okinawa, Military Occupation of" should receive the same amount of space (four pages) as "Vietnam War."

Finally, the price limits the likelihood that many individuals will purchase personal copies, even though those who regularly write and teach about war and ethics would find this encyclopedia valuable.

Taylor, Michael, ed. *Brassey's World Aircraft & Systems Directory 1996-97*. London: Brassey's (UK), 1996. 576pp. \$99.95

This is the "inaugural edition" of this reference. Its chief editor was assisted by contributors Piotr Butowski (for Russian and Polish military aviation), David Mondey (helicopters), Neville Beckett (British military aerospace), Geoffrey P.

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Jones (recreational aircraft), Joachim Ewald (sailplanes, motorgliders), Doug Richardson (missiles and radars), and Mike Jerram (runway bearing strengths). Chapters are provided for combat aircraft; reconnaissance, electronic, and other "special mission" aircraft; helicopters and autogyros; general aviation; "buoyant aircraft"; engines; and others implied in the list of contributors above. Each chapter is divided by country, in alphabetical order, and within country by manufacturer. All aircraft or systems in production or development are listed, plus others that seem especially significant. Foreword by Michael Taylor, full-color guide to air force insignia, glossary, and index.

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one is a publishing executive, and one teaches cultural studies at Ripon. The chronology is a particularly useful and varied look-up resource; for instance, it is rich in social entries (first woman naval aviator commissioned, 22 February 1974) and of "firsts" generally (first aircraft destroyed by proximity-fused projectile in combat, by USS *Helena*, 5 January 1943). The reference shelves of scholars, students, buffs, and copyeditors will be the stronger for this book. Glossary.

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Historical Monograph Series

The Historical Monograph program was established in 1975 to encourage both the writing of books on the history of naval warfare and the use of the Naval Historical Collection of the Naval War College Library.

- Hayes, John D., and John Hattendorf, eds. *The Writings of Stephen B. Luce*, 1975. \$10
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- Goldrick, James, and John B. Hattendorf, eds. *Mahan Is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond*, 1993. \$10
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- Still, William N., Jr., ed. *The Queenstown Patrol, 1917: The Diary of Commander Joseph Knefler Taussig, U.S. Navy*, 1996. \$10
- Laning, Harris. *An Admiral's Yarn*. Edited by Mark R. Shulman (forthcoming)

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